

Remarks at a Dinner Hosted by President Boris Yeltsin of Russia *June 17, 1992*

Mr. President, thank you for those very kind words. After what you did on Capitol Hill today, after that sensational speech—it brought the Members of Congress to their feet over and over again—there is absolutely no point in my giving a speech tonight. *[Laughter]*

What we Americans saw was a true democrat who understood the heartbeat of the American people. It came through over and over again, your sensitivity on the prisoners, for example, and many other ways.

I had a note from a very senior person in the communications business; I will give him or her plenty of cover by that definition. And that note said that in all the time that that person had been in Washington, and it's many, many years, there has never been a greater day for mankind than yesterday.

Some of it was clearly the historic agreement on arms control, arms reduction. Some of it was perhaps the agreements that we were to sign today. But I think much more of it was because that person saw a true democrat, a person committed to de-

mocracy and freedom, leading the great country of Russia. We could identify with that, as I say, and we salute you, sir. We know the problems at home are extraordinarily difficult, but I think you leave with all of us feeling that you're going to make it. Somehow, you and this wonderful group of young leaders you've brought with you here to Washington are going to make it.

Let me simply say in conclusion, we want to be at your side. We want to be at your side as you complete the democratic experiment and as you move your great country forward.

And so, may I propose a toast to President Boris Yeltsin and to his wonderful wife, to his team that taught us all a great deal about what commitment means, and to the friendship between Russia and the United States of America that has never, ever been stronger. May God bless your country, and may God bless the United States of America, too.

Note: The President spoke at 8:05 p.m. at the Russian Embassy.

Remarks at a Ceremony Honoring Presidential Scholars *June 18, 1992*

Please be seated, all of you. I know you've been waiting out here for a while. But let me first thank Governor Engler, one of the great Governors of our country out there in the State of Michigan, for his leadership, not simply for his being willing to lead in this field, Presidential scholars, but for what he's doing for our country. I'm also delighted to be with Lamar Alexander. He is literally trying to revolutionize the educational processes in this country. And we owe him a vote of gratitude, too—both of them.

When we were standing on that balcony a minute ago—I'm just sorry all of you weren't here then—with Boris Yeltsin, I

told him, but I want to just say again here today, that we are welcoming to the White House in this ceremony the best and the brightest of American students. We meet on the 28th anniversary of the highest scholastic award that a President can bestow, the Presidential Scholarship Program.

Earlier I was talking to Barbara about this, and she noted that if your scholastic brilliance continues into your career work, maybe you won't end up like I have, where your dog makes more money than you do as an author. *[Laughter]*

I've got to confess that things have changed since I was a student. Nowadays with computers, bringing an apple to the

teacher has an entirely different meaning. [Laughter] But what really hasn't changed is the meaning of education. It can form the noblest character and lay the surest foundation of usefulness to mankind.

Take a look at this year's Presidential scholars, from all 50 States, from the District, U.S. territories, and families living abroad, and consider why you learn: not only for learning's sake, to help yourself, but also to help others. You know that scholarship can further service to Nation and certainly can further service to neighbor and community.

For instance, just to single out a few, here sits Cara Reichel of Rome, Georgia. She's written and illustrated this book. I want to thank her for the copy. Barbara and I are thrilled with the inscription; that's why we brought it along. Anarug Bansal of East Greenwich, Rhode Island. Where's Anarug? Right back here. In his experiments he found a chemical that blocks HIV activity in blood cells. One scholar's family emigrated from the former Soviet Union; another escaped from Hungary. All know how education stems from the human heart and the human mind.

Let me just tell you a little story. Once Albert Einstein and his wife, they visited California's Mount Wilson Observatory. Pointing to a very complex piece of equipment, Mrs. Einstein asked its purpose, and their guide said that it helped determine the shape of the universe. Mrs. Einstein was not impressed. "Oh," she said, "my husband uses the back of an envelope to work that out." [Laughter]

Well, Einstein used envelopes to ask questions and find solutions, and you may use typewriters and word processors or yellow legal pads. I'm told some of you are so intelligent you even know how to set the timer on a VCR. [Laughter] But the goal's the same: To become an educated person. Only then can you use this knowledge to lead humanity to the stars, becoming what we refer to as a Point of Light in the lives of your neighbors and your families and your friends.

That's what Lisa Kim of Minneapolis is doing. She formed a chamber ensemble to perform at local nursing homes and hospitals. And where is she now? Right here.

Congratulations on that. Joane Liu of Princeton Junction, where's Joane? Right over here. She teaches physically and mentally handicapped kids to sing and to read music. And in Davenport, Amy Symons, Amy? Right over here on the end. Amy is a peer tutor. And in Salt Lake City, Alexis Sentell spends hours at the Utah Food Bank. Alexis? Way back there. Across the country in Norwalk, Connecticut, Kendrew Witt coaches Special Olympic swimming. Kendrew, where is he? Right here in the front. Here's what he says, "I wanted to return to the community what it has given to me."

And it's principles like these—that's principles which explain why you've excelled inside and outside of the classroom. And for that we all ought to thank principals with an "al." We need, too, to thank your favorite teacher, your local minister, that close friend in your town or city who literally has inspired you to learn. That brings me to those who deserve the most thanks of all, your parents, giving of their time and of themselves. They truly showed the way.

This is your day, but it is also your parents' day. And Shannon Wallace is a Presidential scholar from Sewickley, Pennsylvania. Shannon? Right back here. And she asked, "How do you thank your parents for 18 years of a wonderful, solid upbringing?" And if I could suggest a way: Honor them. Remember always that learning and teaching is a lifelong enterprise.

Our pioneering program that I referred to earlier to literally revolutionize education, it's called America 2000, recognizes the fact that education is key to our economic survival. We know that education can help achieve America's three great legacies: family, jobs, and peace.

So our America 2000 program challenges students to stay involved in their schools and schools in their community. Our crusade seeks to make America number one in math and science by the year 2000, increasing our ability to learn and compete in the world, and making our great country more prosperous.

Education is our most enduring legacy, vital to everything we are and everything we can become. It's as young as you are,

and it's as old as the Scriptures. And it can, indeed, make America a better Nation and ensure a more decent world.

To every Presidential scholar, my heartfelt congratulations. Barbara and I both congratulate you and honor you. And to all of you here, thank you parents for what you do. To the rest of you on the Commission, thank you for giving of yourselves to keep this wonderful program going forward.

Thank you all for coming to the White House on this very special low humidity day—[laughter]—on the South Lawn of the White House.

May God bless our great country. Thank you.

Note: The President spoke at 9:10 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Question-and-Answer Session With Employees of Evergreen Oil in Newark, California

June 18, 1992

Mr. Morgan. It's my pleasure, Mr. President, to introduce to you some of our friends, our neighbors. Evergreen Oil is only possible because we have had some shareholders that have had a lot of foresight. The city of Newark has been very cooperative, a partnership. But most of all, our employees are the ones that made this possible.

So, now that I've got the mike, and I'm not going to have this chance again, I want to ask the first question. Is that all right?

The President. That's the way it is, give a guy a little power. [Laughter]

Q. I know there's been a lot of questions about the environment, but one of the things of our environment that has been in the press a lot lately, and I think as a father and businessman and this sort of thing, I'd like to know how your historic treaty with President Yeltsin and the arms reductions is going to affect people like me and the rest of us here?

The President. Well, let me just say that this morning we said goodbye to President Yeltsin, a new kind of Russian leader. Democratically elected, he came to the United States with the vote of the people behind him. And what we worked out in the arms control field is literally historic. There will be no question that what happened as we move to eliminate now, have agreement to eliminate the most destabilizing missiles, in their case the big SS-18's, multiwarhead missiles that for years have plagued everybody, that move is destined

to make life better for our kids.

Curt and I were talking—he's got a big family and so do we—but for years the children in this country have been going to bed with the fear of nuclear weapons. What happened in the last 2 days is really historic. It has an effect not only on the psychology of all of this, but also it has an enormous effect on the jobs for the future. Because what we're doing now as we move down any military threat is to move forward with business exchanges, and the export potential in that country is enormous, which would mean jobs for the United States at home.

So it was historic. It's a joy doing business with this man. I wish all of you could have seen the way in which he was received, maybe you did see it on the tube, by the United States Congress.

The other point I'd make to those who are in service here, for years we've been dealing with the Soviets in the spirit of mistrust for plenty of reason. Anytime you're up against a totalitarian regime, you better keep your eyes open. Now we're moving away from that. And his offer to go in with the KGB file, go the extra miles to see if any information can be shed on Americans that are missing, this is very good. And we have a wide array of areas in which we're cooperating, including that one.

So it was a historic day, and I think it means a lot for generations to come. It